

**I-5, COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING PROJECT UPDATE
(VANCOUVER)**

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the
October 2004 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Prepared by: Don Wagner, Southwest Regional Administrator
Approved by: John Conrad, Assistant Secretary for Engineering & Regional Operations

PURPOSE:

Provide the full Commission with information on the Columbia River Crossing Project, including its history and background, near-term plans, and key issues under consideration. This is similar to the presentation given to Commissioners Davis, Barnes and O'Neal at a September 2, 2004 meeting in Portland, Oregon.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

Ensure a consistent understanding of this project's background and future with all current Commissioners.

BACKGROUND:

The I-5 corridor between Clark County and Portland faces increasing pressures of congestion, safety, and delays in freight and commuter movement. A critical connection in that corridor, the Interstate Bridge across the Columbia River, is actually two side-by-side bridges built in 1917 and 1958. This I-5 Crossing is an essential element in the future of this region's economy and how effectively goods and people move within it. However, the current I-5 crossing is functionally obsolete.

In 1998, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) partnered with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and other local stakeholders in Washington and Oregon to plan and implement improvements along the I-5 corridor from I-84 in Oregon to I-205 in Washington. Key points in this collaborative effort include:

- Establishment by the Oregon and Washington Governors of a Governors Task Force for the I-5 Trade Corridor in the Vancouver-Portland Area
- Establishment of the I-5 Trade Partnership to formulate a plan for the I-5 Trade Corridor between SR500 on the North, and I-84 on the South; and
- Completion of the Final Strategic Plan in June 2002 by the I-5 Trade Partnership.

Two studies, the *Portland/Vancouver I-5 Trade Corridor Freight Feasibility and Needs Assessment Study*, completed in 2000, and the *Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation*

and Trade Partnership Study, completed in 2002, included a variety of corridor-wide improvement and traffic management recommendations. These improvements will increase safety and decrease future congestion on this vital freight and commuter corridor.

Washington and Oregon share goals for improving many types of transportation within the corridor. We also share responsibility for maintaining and replacing the current crossing infrastructure. While a strong local commitment to make the region a more attractive and economically sustainable destination has emerged over the last decade, this requires infrastructure improvements across the river. One key recommendation from the I-5 Partnership Strategic Plan adopted in 2002 called for additional capacity over the Columbia River with a replacement bridge or by supplementing the existing I-5 bridges to ease impacts of bottlenecked traffic on local and interstate commerce.

Building momentum toward a solution

A bi-state consensus has been forged that illustrates a bi-state responsibility and commitment to make necessary improvements in support of economic development, quality of life and regional sustainability. Formalized in the 2002 *Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan*, regional leadership pledged to work together to solve the problem.

Early implementation efforts recommended in the strategy are underway in both states. These include widening I-5 north of Vancouver (I-5/Salmon Creek to I-205, \$32.2 million) that is currently under construction. It also includes widening southbound I-5 at a critical choke point in Oregon known as Delta Park. This is currently moving through the EIS process (estimated construction cost of \$40 to \$50 million). The most prominent recommendation, however, and probably the most challenging, is to make needed changes in the Columbia River Crossing.

What is the Columbia River Crossing Project?

The I-5 Trade Partnership developed a long-term vision for the I-5 Trade Corridor to be developed in phases. The Columbia River Crossing Project (CRCP) is a major component of this vision, with a goal to alleviate the bottleneck caused by the Interstate Bridge and to address the aging infrastructure. As part of this project, WSDOT and ODOT now are focusing their combined attention on analyzing and further considering the scoping, funding and implementation and other issues not previously addressed in the study. ODOT and WSDOT have jointly chartered the project and are jointly administering this planning phase.

The Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions established a Columbia River Crossing Joint Commission Subcommittee comprised of three members from each state's Transportation Commission to help achieve the goals mentioned above. In addition, a Columbia River Crossing Task Force, made up of local partners and transportation

officials, is currently being chartered to provide recommendations specific to this project to the Joint Commission Subcommittee.

Current funding for the project is \$6.9 million, which includes several efforts to carry the project into the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These include:

- Technical, policy and regulatory analysis to support feasible options (this includes considering adding multimodal capacity to the highway crossing and addressing the surrounding area influenced by the crossing).
- Preparation for NEPA Scoping
- Regional leadership and agency coordination
- Planning for inclusive and meaningful public involvement.

Additional funding will be needed to move this project into the EIS process. We look forward to moving this much-needed project through this planning phase.

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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**



**Oregon
Department
of Transportation**



*Prepared for September 2, 2004 Meeting of the
Joint Commission Subcommittee*

The Columbia River Crossing Project

Report on Project Status

- *Where we've been*
- *Where we are now*
- *What's coming up*

In May 2004, the Joint Commission Subcommittee heard about preliminary work to kick off the Columbia River Crossing Project. Now, the WSDOT and ODOT joint project team will brief the Subcommittee on significant progress - in work activities, contractual milestones, and technical work products.

What's Driving This Project?

- The Interstate 5 Bridge across the Columbia River is actually two bridges side-by-side, built in 1917 and 1958. They work in combination with the I-205 Columbia River Bridge. There are congestion and safety issues today. What about tomorrow?
- A world-class economy in the Vancouver/Portland region needs world-class infrastructure. Businesses continually cite freight and commuter congestion and safety as top regional issues.
- Two states are involved, and the issues are shared. Strong commitment exists from both sides of the river to move ahead with improvements in the Columbia River Crossing area.

Where We've Been...

1999-2002

In 1999, regional business leaders joined in the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Trade Corridor Study to identify corridor congestion problems. They responded strongly that reducing congestion and improving movement of people and goods are critical to the region's economy. The Partnership Task Force developed a Strategic Plan with findings and recommendations regarding the seven components below. The first four components are advancing for further study and evaluation within the framework of the Columbia River Crossing Project. It is anticipated that the other three components will be addressed in other venues.

I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Components

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Transit | • Additional Rail Capacity |
| • Interstate 5 | • Land Use |
| • Environmental Justice | • Transportation Demand and System Management |
| • Finance | |



Joint Project Team Makes Progress

Since the last Joint Commission Subcommittee meeting, the project team has:

- Framed joint team management structure -- named and co-located project co-directors.
- Agreed on how to manage the project as one project team -- developed ODOT/WSDOT project team MOU and draft charter for advisory task force.
- Continued discussions with regional partners, including FHWA, FTA, and MPO's, transit agencies, ports, cities, and counties, at elected, leadership and staff levels.

Where We Are Now...

2004-Mid 2005

The analyses summarized below will help answer questions and add background information in the technical areas identified. This information will build a strong foundation for the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Areas for Analysis

■ Conceptual Engineering and Environmental

- Design requirements and technical information
- Environmental issues
- Key engineering considerations

Consultants: Kittelson & Associates, with Parsons Brinckerhoff, CH2MHill, Right of Way Associates, Howell Consulting, and JD White Company

■ Finance and Tolling Feasibility

- Tolling options and development of assumptions for DEIS
- Financing strategies

Consultants: David Evans and Associates, with Parisi Associates, Vollmer Associates LLP, and The Larkin Group

■ Traffic and Transit

- Travel and traffic analyses
- Modeling assumptions and model options
- Effects of tolling on traffic/transit

Consultants: David Evans and Associates, with Parisi Associates and Vollmer Associates LLP

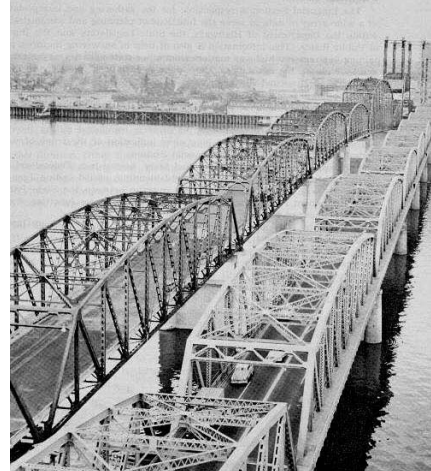
■ Regulatory Requirements

- Federal, state, regional, and local statutory and regulatory frameworks

Consultants: The Larkin Group, with Siegel Consulting, Underhill Company LLC, and Daniels Consulting

■ Public Communications and Outreach

Consultants: HNTB, with Envirolssues, JD White Company, Markgraf Associates, Jeanne Lawson Associates, and Northwest Strategies



What's Coming Up...

Mid-2005

- Environmental scoping
 - Transit options
 - Bridge and highway options
 - Finance options
- Corridor-wide public involvement

2005-2007

- Evaluate most reasonable and promising alternatives
- Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Making Progress On Work Products

To date, the project team has completed work in the following major areas:

■ Memorandum of Understanding between ODOT and WSDOT

Draft MOU defining project management presented under today's Agenda Item #2

■ Columbia River Crossing Task Force Charter

Proposed project oversight structure presented under today's Agenda Item #3

■ Tolling

Work in final or draft form includes:

- Introduction to tolling and survey of tolling experience in the U.S., Canada and Europe
- Analyses of state and federal tolling statutes and their effects on this project
- Identification and evaluation of toll plaza models
- Evaluation of the availability and usability of existing data to screen tolling options

■ Travel Characteristics and Trends

Work in final or draft form includes an analysis of trends in traffic and travel characteristics and an evaluation of the availability and usability of existing travel and traffic data.

Cost Status 2004-2005

Funding for Planning Level Work	Available	Obligated ¹	Remaining
Oregon	\$3,900,000	\$3,300,000	\$600,000
Washington	\$3,000,000	\$2,250,000	\$750,000 ²

Contract Scope	Lead Consultant	Authorized Budget	Billed through July
Project Management & Technical Analysis	The Larkin Group	\$1,251,890	\$300,109
Traffic & Tolling	David Evans Associates	\$639,147	\$36,089
Conceptual Engineering & Environmental	Kittelson & Associates	\$213,845 ³	—
Metro-Data	Metro	\$15,500	—
Communications & Outreach	HNTB/EnviroIssues	\$110,000	\$27,877
Freight Movement	Cambridge Systematics	\$10,300	\$8,065
Total		\$2,240,682	\$372,140

¹Estimated to complete this planning level phase.

²Balance from TEA-21 extension or TEA-21 reauthorization.

³Phase one only (through late September); to be amended.

Learn More About The Columbia River Crossing Project

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